

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 SS-15 SP-02 CIAE-00
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L-03 PA-01 /067 W
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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8595
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

S E C R E T JAKARTA 5938

WELLINGTON FOR VICE PRESIDENT'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: OVIP (MONDALE, WALTER F.)
SUBJECT: GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE POLITICAL IMPACT OF VICE
PRESIDENT MONDALE'S VISIT TO INDONESIA

1. SUMMARY: VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE'S MAY 7-9 VISIT TO
JAKARTA SERVED TO REMOVE SEVERAL LONG-STANDING BILATERAL
IRRITANTS, REASSURED INDONESIANS OF OUR CONTINUED INTEREST
IN THE AREA, AND INSTILLED AN IMPORTANT PERSONAL ELEMENT IN
OUR RELATIONSHIP. OUR CONCERN FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN
RIGHTS IN INDONESIA WAS UNDERSCORED WITHOUT, HOWEVER,
CREATING BACKLASH AGAINST US OR HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS.
ALL AVAILABLE EVIDENCE THUS FAR SUGGESTS THAT THIS VIEW IS
SHARED BY THE GOI LEADERSHIP AND BY BOTH THE PRO-GOVERNMENT
AND OPPOSITIONIST PRESS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE VICE PRESIDENT'S PARTY WILL BE REPORTING ON SUBSTAN-
TIVE MATTERS UNDERTAKEN DURING HIS MAY 7-9 VISIT TO
INDONESIA. THIS CABLE IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE MY PERSONAL
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VIEWS OF THE GENERAL IMPACT OF THE VISIT ON OUR BILAT-
ERAL RELATIONSHIP, BASED ON SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATIONS
WITH INDONESIAN LEADERS AND ON TREATMENT OF THE VISIT IN
THE INDONESIAN PRESS.

3. THE VICE PRESIDENT'S ABILITY AT THE OUTSET OF THE
TALKS WITH SUHARTO TO REMOVE OR SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE

SEVERAL LONG-STANDING IRRITANTS IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP (THE IRS TAX ISSUE, DOUBTS OVER PROVIDING A-4S, AND THE LNG PRICE ESCALATION CLAUSE) SET A POSITIVE MOOD, WHICH WAS STEADILY STRENGTHENED AS THE VISIT PROGRESSED. MINISTER OF STATE SUDHARMO, WHO IS ONE OF SUHARTO'S CLOSEST CONFIDANTS, TOLD ME THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS DELIGHTED WITH THE MEETING AND WITH THE NUMBER OF PROBLEMS THAT HAD BEEN RESOLVED. VIRTUALLY THE SAME COMMENT WAS MADE BY ANOTHER OFFICER CLOSE TO THE PRESIDENT, MAJOR GENERAL BENNY MURDANI. LOCAL PRESS REPORTING OF THE VISIT HAS STRESSED THE IRS TAX DECISION, AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO PROVIDE A-4S AND THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF ADDITIONAL PL-480 RICE, ALONG WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ON RELEASE OF DETAINEES.

4. JUDGING FROM REACTIONS WE ARE RECEIVING, THE VICE PRESIDENT'S ASSURANCES OF CONTINUED U.S. INTEREST IN THE AREA WERE GIVEN ADDED WEIGHT BY THE ATTENTION PAID SUHARTO'S PERSONAL CONCERN (SHARED BY OTHER TOP LEADERS) THAT SOME MILITARY MODERNIZATION IS NECESSARY FOR INDONESIA'S DEFENSE AND FOR THE MORALE OF ITS FORCES. THE RESPONSE TO THE A-4 REQUEST WAS IN PARTICULAR HELPFUL (ALTHOUGH INDONESIANS ARE STILL WORRIED OVER OBTAINING ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR THE PROJECT). THE OVERALL IMPACT IN THIS AREA WAS PERHAPS MOST DRAMATICALLY SIGNED BY THE EDITORIAL TURN-ABOUT OF THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED NEWSPAPER SECRET

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SUARA KARYA, WHICH ON THE EVE OF THE VISIT HAD COMPLAINED BITTERLY THAT U.S. COMMERCIAL INTERESTS IN EAST ASIA COULD NOT COMPENSATE FOR A REDUCED MILITARY PRESENCE AND WHICH CAPTIONED ITS POST-VISIT EDITORIAL "MONDALE ELIMINATES DOUBT".

5. THE PLAYBACK WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND ON THE COFFEE MEETING WITH NON-OFFICIAL INDONESIANS (WHICH HAD CAUSED SOME PRIOR CONSTERNATION IN OFFICIAL CIRCLES) HAS THUS FAR BEEN VERY GOOD. JUSUF WANANDI, ONE OF THE TWO STRONG GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS AT THE COFFEE MEETING, EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE GIVE-AND-TAKE AT THE SESSION AND WAS UNDISTURBED BY OPPOSITIONIST BUYUNG NASUTION'S LOUD CRITICISM OF THE GOI WHEN PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS WERE ALLOWED IN, WHICH WANANDI DESCRIBED AS SELF-DEFEATING "GRANDSTANDING". NASUTION IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH US TODAY EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE MEETING AND APOLOGIZED FOR SOME OF HIS LESS MODERATE COMMENTS. MUSLIM OPPOSITIONIST IMRON ROSJADI TOLD PRESS THAT AMERICANS "CAN STILL BE RELIED UPON TO KEEP AN OPEN MIND", AND THIS ATTITUDE WAS REFLECTED IN THE OPPOSITIONIST NEWSPAPER PELITA.

6. IN VIEW OF THE GREAT IMPORTANCE PRESIDENT SUHARTO PLACES ON PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, THE MOST PRODUCTIVE RESULT OF THE VISIT IN THE LONG TERM MAY WELL BE THE WARM PERSONAL ELEMENT DEVELOPED DURING THE COURSE OF THE TALKS. SUDHARMONO EMPHASIZED TO ME THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE SINCERE INTEREST AND UNDERSTANDING SHOWN BY THE VICE PRESIDENT IN INDONESIA AND ITS PROBLEMS. AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON ASHARI ALSO REPORTED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD SPOKEN WARMLY AND FAVORABLY TO HIM ABOUT HIS MEETING WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT. THE CONCLUDING COMMENTS IN SUARA KARYA'S EDITORIAL MAY SUM UP THE OVERALL GOI REACTION TO THE VISIT: "VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE ARRIVED IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF HEARTFELT ANXIETY; HE DEPARTS LEAVING BEHIND A BASIS TO HOPE THAT AMERICA HAS NOT LOST THE CHARACTERISTICS WHICH
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HAVE MADE IT GREAT."
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